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SANTA CLARA VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER
Hospital & Clinics

Hospital Administration
751 South Bascom Avenue
San Jose, California 95128

June 5, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
            Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Rene G. Santiago, Deputy County Executive & Director,
            County of Santa Clara Health System

            Paul E. Lorenz, Chief Executive Officer, SCVMC

SUBJECT: Off Agenda report from April 15, 2019 Health and Hospital Committee meeting
            regarding the Financial Impact of Medi-Cal Enrollment

Under advisement from the Health and Hospital Committee (HHC) meeting of April 15, 2019, (per agenda item no. 5), HHC requested that Administration provide an off-agenda report on the data source and reliability of data provided in the Financial Impact of Medi-Cal Enrollment report presented to HHC.   Below please find detailed information regarding the data source.

During the presentation on the financial impact of Medi-Cal enrollment, data was presented on the percentage of Santa Clara County residents with health insurance coverage. Additional information was requested in regards to the source of data, reliability of data source and representativeness of the data that was presented.

Data Source
The percentage of Santa Clara residents with health insurance was pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS survey is a nationwide survey that collects and produces information on social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics. Every year, the Census Bureau contacts over 3.5 million households across the Country to participate in the ACS survey. This survey not only includes the basic short-form questions about age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, household relationship, and owner/renter status the questions (questions in US national census collected every 10 years) but also detailed questions about population and housing characteristics.   Information from the survey generates data that helps determine how Federal and State funds are allocated each year.

Reliability
Figure 1 shows the percentage of Santa Clara County with health insurance coverage. The table also shows the margin of error for the estimated numbers. The values shown for each year are above the 90 percent margin of error, which is interpreted as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value.

Figure 1 - Health Insurance Status in Santa Clara County by Year,
including Margin of Error

	2012	Margin of Error*	2015	Margin of Error	2017	Margin of Error
Total with health insurance coverage (#)	1,612,335		1,815,366	+/-6,120	1,849,398	+/- 7,222
Total with health insurance coverage (%)	88.1%		95.1%	+/-0.3	95.9%	+/-0.4
Total with NO health insurance coverage (#)	216,782	+/-9,188	93,437	+/-5,959	79,343	+/-7,063
Total with NO health insurance coverage (%)	11.9%	+/-0.5	4.9%	+/-0.3	4.1%	+/-0.4
TOTAL	1,829,117	+/-1,282	1,908,803	+/-1,314	1,928,741	+/-1,233

Source: American Community Survey (1- year estimates for 2012, 2015, 2017); Totals equal civilian noninstitutionalized population (civilians not residing in group quarters)
*Margin of error not reported for total people with health insurance coverage in 2012.

The ACS Survey measures insured and uninsured coverage by asking questions about coverage through an employer; direct purchase from an insurance company Medicare, Medicaid or other government assistance health plans; military health care coverage; Veterans Administration (VA) health care; Indian Health Services; or other types of health insurance or coverage plans. Plans that cover only one type of health care (such as dental plans) or plans that only cover a person in case of an accident or disability are not included. Figure 2 shows the specific questions that appear in the ACS Survey.

Figure 2 – Health insurance or health coverage plan questions in the ACS Survey

Respondents are instructed to report their current coverage and to mark "yes" or "no" for each of the eight types listed. Respondents are considered insured if at least one "yes" is marked and considered uninsured if reported no health coverage, or those whose only health coverage was Indian Health Service. Questions and answer choices were the same for all reported years in 2012, 2015 and 2017.

Population Sampling & Representativeness
The Census Bureau selects a random sample of addresses to be included in the ACS Survey. Questionnaires are sent by mail to specific addresses, not individuals, to ensure good geographic coverage. Households are asked to complete the survey online or to mail the completed paper questionnaire back to the Census Bureau's National Processing Center. If the Census Bureau does not receive a completed survey within a few weeks, it will make multiple attempts to follow-up by mailing an additional paper survey questionnaire, calling by phone or following up in person. The ACS sample is selected from all Counties and County-equivalents in the United States to produce a representative sample of the population.

For the data source in question, the sample size and interviews completed for California and Santa Clara County are shown in Figure 3. The ACS uses a weighted random sample that provides estimates on population and housing statistics, such as health insurance coverage, within the County population. Because ACS is a sample, its estimates have a degree of uncertainty which is quantified by the margin of error or confidence interval calculations. Weighting methodology is applied to the sample size for Santa Clara County to calculate the population estimates and health insurance coverage estimates that are reflective of the population. Weighting areas are County-based and have been used since the first year of the ACS survey.

More information on ACS sampling can be found in the following website:
https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/sample-size-and-data-quality/sample-size-definitions.html.
Information on ACS weighting methodology, including characteristics used to form weights, weight factors, formula, and other technical details can be found in this website:
https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2016.pdf.

Figure 3 - Sample Size for California and Santa Clara County

	California		Santa Clara County	
Year	Initial Addresses Selected	Final Interviews	Initial Addresses Selected	Final Interviews
2012	330,433	219,484	14,189	10,318
2015	328,952	215,206	14,124	10,293
2017	328,123	201,604	14,252	9,898

The health insurance coverage estimate does not include residents of group quarters. Examples of group quarters include college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, workers' dormitories, homeless facilities.